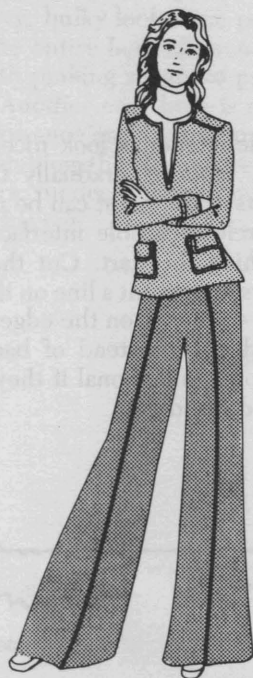


## SYNTHETIC SUEDE LOOKS ALL SEWN UP

Margret Ann Vanderpoorten\*

Synthetic suedes are popular because they are easy to sew, easy to care for and wear well. Most are completely machine washable and dryable. A few need light pressing and brushing before wearing.

Synthetic suedes look and feel like suede but do not lint, water spot or stiffen. Colors do not fade as real suede often does. Sewing techniques depend on the kind of synthetic suede used.



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There are basically two types of synthetic suede. One has a suede-like nap on a knitted or woven background fabric. The other type is nonwoven and looks like chamois, or skin, on the wrong side.

The napped-fabric suedes may be sewn with the same techniques that are used for any napped fabric, such as corduroy or velvet. The nonwoven suedes may be sewn using conventional techniques or with the techniques used for genuine leather.

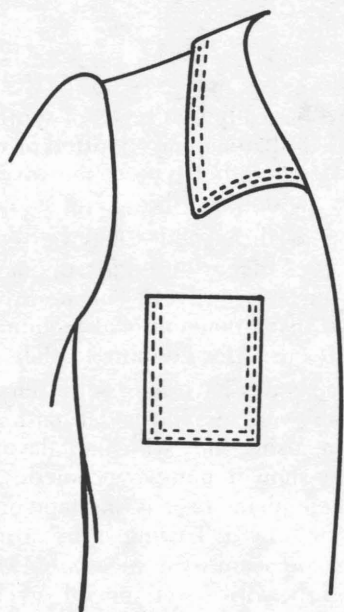
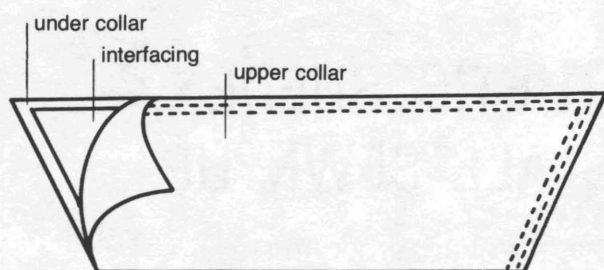
Synthetic suedes have nap, so purchase fabric by the "with nap" yardage and lay all pattern pieces in one direction, using the "with nap" layout. Because pin holes may show in non-woven suedes, it is a good idea to use cellophane or masking tape or paper clips rather than pinning or basting. Pins, if used, should be placed in the seam allowance only. Markings can be made lightly with a soft pencil or chalk on the wrong side of non-wovens. These marks will brush or wash off.

Polyester or silk thread and a size 14 needle are recommended. The stitch length for napped fabrics should be about 12 to 15 per inch and about 8 to 12 per inch for non-woven suede. Preshrink notions, as well as the fabric. Non-woven suede will not shrink, but washing will remove excess finishing chemicals and soften the fabric for easier handling.

When using conventional sewing methods on non-woven suede, press each seam open to avoid a bulky appearance. Topstitch both sides or fuse the seam allowances to the garment. Tie all thread ends, instead of backstitching, to prevent enlarging the stitching holes or cutting the edge of fabric with the needle.

## Collars, Cuffs and Pockets

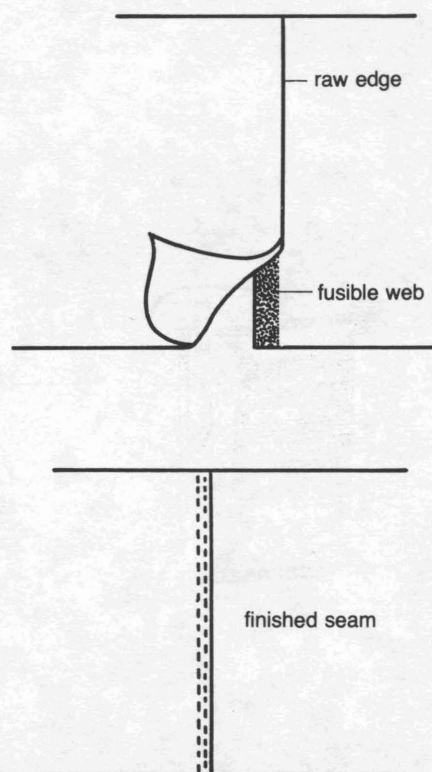
Collars, cuffs and pockets on non-woven suedes may be constructed using a simple leather technique. Place the wrong sides together. If interfacing is used, place it between the layers of fabric. Stitch through all layers  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch from the raw edge. Stitch again  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch inside the first row of stitching. Trim away the seam allowance. This method eliminates bulk and gives a neat tailored finish.



## Seams

Seams on non-woven suedes will be flat and sporty in appearance if the lapped leather seam is used. First, trim away one seam allowance completely. Lap the raw edge over the seam allowance of the matching piece. Fuse lightly along the seam line, using a  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch wide strip of fusible web between the layers. This holds the seam in place for fitting purposes and for stitching.

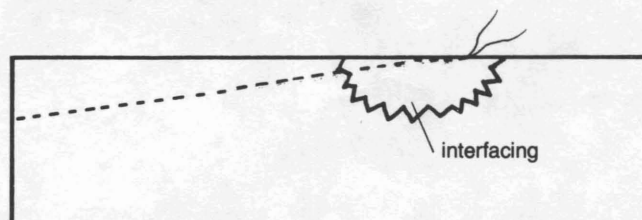
Topstitch along edge and again  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch from the first row of stitching. The inside seam allowance may be trimmed close to stitching if desired.



Synthetic suedes that are woven or knitted will have the same sporty appearance if each seam has double rows of topstitching for decoration.

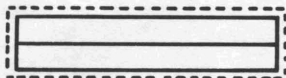
## Darts

Darts in synthetic suedes look nicer if they are long and slender, tapering gradually to the point. Dimples or puckers at the point can be prevented by fusing a 1-inch circle of fusible interfacing over the point before stitching the dart. Cut the interfacing with pinking shears to prevent a line on the right side. Make the last 3 or 4 stitches on the edge of the interfacing. Tie thread ends instead of back stitching. Darts will look more professional if they are slashed open, trimmed and fused flat.



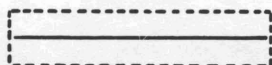
## Buttonholes

Buttonholes in synthetic suedes may be bound. For a professional looking bound buttonhole, topstitch through all layers outside the lips after completing the buttonhole. This holds the buttonhole flat.



bound buttonhole

Leather-method buttonholes are easy and effective in non-woven suedes. After completing the garment, mark buttonholes on the right side with chalk that can be brushed off. Using 12 to 15 stitches per inch, stitch a rectangle  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch wide and the desired length. Slash through the center, being careful not to cut ends. Use a tweezer to pull out any interfacing threads or fuzz.

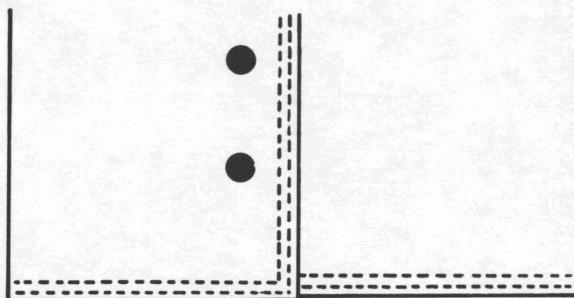


leather-method buttonhole

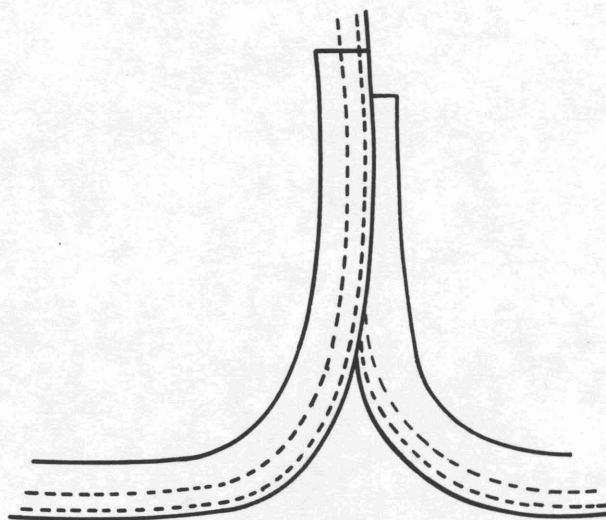
## Hems

Make hems in synthetic suedes 2 inches or less to avoid a heavy, bulky look. One popular hem is made by fusing the entire hem allowance up, using fusible web cut with pinking shears to prevent a line on the right side. Another easy hem is made by turning up the hem allowance and topstitching twice around the bottom, matching the decorative lapped seams. On napped-fabric suedes, zigzag or overcast the raw edge to prevent fraying.

If the hem is curved, a nice finish can be obtained by facing non-woven suedes. Trim the hem to the desired length. Cut a facing to match the lower edge, about  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch wide for jackets and sleeves and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches wide for skirts and coats. Place the facing under the hem, wrong sides together and topstitch twice. The stitching holds the facing securely and it will not fall down because it is the same shape as the garment.



topstitched hem



faced hem (wrong side)



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